(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) The Government of India is aware of the existence of camps in Nepal housing several thousand refugees and of the fact that the Royal Government of Bhutan and Government of Nepal are engaged in bilateral discussions to address this issue. As a friendly neighbour of both the countries, Government of India sincerely hopes that this long-pending issue would be resolved at the earliest.

Celebration of first war of Independence

2932. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to rope people from Pakistan and Bangladesh into the 150th anniversary celebrations of the first war of Indian Independence;

(b) if so, the details worked out so far;

(c) whether Government had set up a national committee to draw up the contours;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the said Committee had met to discuss the issue; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the decisions taken so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (f) Yes, Sir. The Government has set up a National Committee under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister to chalk out the programmes for celebration of the 150th anniversary of the First War of Independence, 1857 and other related events. The Committee includes former Prime Ministers, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chairperson UPA, several Union Ministers, Governors, Chief Ministers of States, representatives of political parties, MPs, journalists and other dignitaries.

The Committee held its first meeting on July 13, 2006 at which suggestions were made by members, *inter alia,* on publishing documents relating to freedom struggle in Hindi and other regional languages, publish eye-witness accounts of freedom movement, hold commemorative programmes at the National, State and local levels throughout the year

2007-2008, set up parks and memorials, in memory of the freedom fighters, organize suitable functions in various parts of the world with the help of Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Indian Missions, and involve Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh in this commemoration.

These suggestions are being examined by the Government and will be considered further by the National Implementation Committee.

Joint Efforts to combat terrorism

2933. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the joint efforts of India and USA in combating terrorism have yielded any results;

(b) whether India has actually benefited through US assistance in combating terrorism; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that India face more threats due to its association with USA incombating terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) While India has the will and the capacity to combat all acts of terror within its territory, cooperation at the international level is required to deal effectively with the transnational dimensions of the problem. Accordingly, India cooperaties with a number of countries, including the USA, through Joint Working Groups on Counter -Terrorism, details are enclosed as Statement (*See* below).

India and US Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism has had seven meetings since its inception, the last meeting being in Washington on April 19 - 20, 2006. The Joint Working Group has coordinated efforts, *inter alia,* in the areas of:—

(i) Information Sharing;

(ii) Capacity Building;

(iii) Inter - Agency Cooperation;

(iv) Development of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.

(c) India has been a target of terrorism for over two decades with support and abetment from across its borders. It would be incorrect to link this development to India's relations with countries outside the region.